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SPECIAL PROGRAMME RESOURCES

Note by the Administrator

SUMMARY

The report of the Administrator on Special Programme Resources (DP/1991/5) outlines the main thrusts proposed for fifth cycle Special Programme Resources (SPR) by major programmes in accordance with the objectives laid down by the Governing Council. The present paper complements document DP/1991/5 by elaborating on the proposed managerial arrangements which should ensure transparency in the planning processes of SPR and their effective utilization.

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper elaborates on the ways and means intended to ensure the comprehensive application and management of the SPR programme along the thematic areas determined by the Governing Council in decision 90/34 of 23 June 1990. It is based on the substantial experience gained in recent years, which has demonstrated that the characteristics of SPR-funded activities require programme and management arrangements not essentially different from those that apply to other United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) funds.

I. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

2. SPR are currently managed through similar procedures and institutional arrangements to those applying to national and regional indicative planning figure (IPF)-funded programmes. The Directors of the Regional Bureaux are responsible for promoting themes and approaches adopted by the Governing Council; they will develop programmes and projects to achieve those programme goals. The programmes to be funded in the fifth programming cycle under SPR, together with the estimates in the project pipeline, have been the base for the earmarkings of fifth cycle SPR presented to the Governing Council at its thirty-seventh session (1990) as well as at the present special session. To the extent the development of new concepts and approaches or the mainstreaming of new concepts require financial resources for experimentation, research and pilot schemes, the Directors of the Regional Bureaux will elaborate projects for submission to the Action Committee for approval under SPR funding.

II. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

3. Responsibility for programme development within each one of the lines of activity listed in the proposed SPR earmarkings (see document DP/1991/5, para. 5 and table) has been given to one of the Bureaux Directors. In most cases, the Directors have appointed individual managers to develop and manage specific themes such as poverty, women in development and education for all. Strategies and programmes within these areas are elaborated by the programme managers and are from time to time discussed in the Policy Planning Committee with participation from all Bureaux. This Committee does not formally approve the programmes nor does it discuss the financial implications but it serves an important function as a sounding board. The programmes are later covered in reports submitted to the Governing Council. As required, the programmes are submitted to the Action Committee.

4. Projects to be funded under SPR are formulated in the same format and scrutinized by the same appraisal bodies as projects funded under IPFs. Those bodies are normally referred to as Project Appraisal Committees (PACs); in some cases, however, reference bodies with representation from all interested bureaux and units have been created for consultation and continuous programme review. In those cases, the reference bodies review proposed projects to ensure that technical

design is appropriate and that the project is in compliance with distribution and other eligibility criteria established for the programme. Examples of such reference bodies are the Environment Action Team and the Management Development Programme Reference Group.

III. ACTION COMMITTEE

5. To assist the Administrator in the articulation, interpretation and implementation of overall SPR policies as well as in the review and approval of specific programmes, the Administrator is assisted by the Action Committee.

6. The Planning and Coordination Office (PCO), in its capacity as secretariat to the Action Committee will provide the necessary UNDP support with respect to procedures, reporting and criteria (see annex). The Administrator proposes the introduction of principles similar to those in the annex to guide the use of SPR resources for other thematic activities during the fifth programming cycle. Specific guidelines will be developed for each thematic initiative included in document DP/1991/5, and these will serve as the basis for the identification, formulation, appraisal, approval and implementation of individual project activities. The Governing Council will be advised of these guidelines as they are established. This will help to ensure SPR use in innovative ways to complement and reinforce activities included in country programmes.

7. The Action Committee reviews and approves the objectives and plans of work for each of the individual programmes. The documents, in a manner similar to the country programmes, will include background, justification, impacts, expected projects and tentative budgets. Specific criteria for eligibility of funds, such as project contents and country eligibility will be articulated for each programme. After appraisal and approval by the Action Committee the programmes will be communicated to the Governing Council. The project documents will define the activities to be financed, and will include explicit references to linkages with IPF projects at the national, regional, interregional and global levels. The project document will also indicate the needs for evaluations beyond standard UNDP procedures, as well as special subject reporting requirements as defined by the Council.

IV. PROJECT EXECUTION

8. SPR-funded projects will be executed through the same institutional arrangements as IPF-funded projects. As in the case of IPF-funded projects, there is a tendency for agency execution to give way to national execution. In some cases, for example, the Management Development Programme (MDP), the Office for Project Services (OPS) execution is the most common modality.

V. EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING

9. SPR-funded projects are subject to evaluation, monitoring and reporting according to the same rules as other projects. Since they are supposed to be experimental and innovative, however, they will in practice be subject to more frequent thematic evaluation than regular IPF-financed projects. A more elaborate data base system is being currently designed to allow monitoring of the SPR-funded projects from the allocation and commitments stage all the way to implementation. This will allow the Administrator to present the Governing Council with annual reports on the progress not only of SPR-funded projects, but of all activities related to the themes in which the Council has expressed particular interest.

Annex

PROPOSED MODEL CRITERIA FOR USE OF SPECIAL PROGRAMME RESOURCES IN THE FIFTH CYCLE

1. Governing Council decision 90/34 indicates that SPR resources during the fifth programming cycle period should be innovative and catalytic in nature and should complement and reinforce country programmes. This corresponds to the manner in which the MDP has been implemented during the fourth programming cycle. The MDP operates in accordance with the following principles:

(a) The Programme is available to all countries wishing to participate. In order to ensure a fair regional balance in administering the funds available under the Programme, no more than 50 per cent of the resources are allocated to programmes in any one region;

(b) The Programme operates only in response to requests from developing countries to assist them to design and/or implement longer-term national programmes of management development and related institution-building;

(c) In the use of Programme funds, no conditionality is applied other than the normal requirements of UNDP programmes;

(d) The use of the Programme resources is not related to the implementation of any policy other than that of the Governments concerned; and

(e) The activities of UNDP under the Programme are not conditioned by those of any other organization.

2. In appraising requests for assistance under the MDP, the Administrator also assures himself that because management issues often involve important and sensitive aspects of Government, functioning, there is, at the highest policy-making levels of Government, full support, and commitment to the successful implementation of the intended public sector reforms. Assurance is also obtained that MDP funds are not being sought as a substitute for available country IPF resources.

3. In addition, the MDP operates under specific guidelines presented to, and approved by, the Governing Council at its thirty-sixth session (1989). These guidelines stress the need to achieve sustainable improvements in the management of the public sector, the introduction of innovative approaches, and assistance to Governments to carry out needs assessments and to formulate programmes for management improvement.